

But in the end these possessions stirred the envy not merely of ambitious and worldly men but also of the land-hungry poor. To be sure the Abbot of a flourishing monastery might correctly point out that the revenues did not enrich the monks, who normally lived under his guidance by an austere religious rule. These religious in their bare cells did not taste the fine vintages pressed from monastery grapes carefully tended by brothers who rose at four for Matins and then expended themselves zealously for the cause of God. Nevertheless the critics were not by any means only emancipated spirits who found moral discipline irksome and the Church old-fashioned. They were also earnest, weather-beaten peasants, with no soil to till, and often desperately poor, who understandably looked upon Church estates with a covetous eye. And of course everywhere the well applauded and sharp-tongued ideologies of the time—Marxism, Nationalism, Nihilism—were allied against the Church, often looked upon by the seemingly more enlightened folk of those days as the heritor of a creed outworn. And it must be admitted that sometimes a segment of the clergy, grown comfortable and worldly, acted as if they thought so, too.

Protestantism inside the old Empire clung to the enclaves which had been established during the era of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. Despite the strife incident to the Thirty Years' War both Lutheranism and Calvinism maintained themselves resolutely in Hungary, for example, so that prior to the outbreak of World War II Catholics in that country constituted about 67 per cent of the population, while Protestants numbered nearly 27 per cent and adhered to both the Lutheran and the Calvinist tradition. In Czechoslovakia the situation was relatively the same, though the number of Protestant groups was greater. A considerable part of the population—6 per cent in 1932—professed no religion of any kind. Another characteristic of the old Empire was the presence of the

CHAPTER I

CHANGES IN PROPERTY: THE LAND REFORM



423 A DESCRIPTION of the economic condition of Stalin's satellites must begin with a consideration of the changes brought about in property relations after the overthrow of the rule of Hitler and his vassals in the countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. As most of the population in these countries earn their living in agriculture* it is convenient to begin with an examination of the changes in land ownership.

There is a widely held belief that the feudal system, with the characteristic feature of the large latifundia, continued to prevail east of the Elbe until the arrival of the Soviet army. The prevalence of this idea is due partly to ignorance, but also to the propaganda spread since the war by the governments of this region, who try to paint as black a picture as possible of the property relations which previously prevailed there in order to magnify the importance of the land reforms they have carried out. This view is incorrect, since before World War II, and in some areas even before World War I, a series of land reforms had already to a large extent changed the system of landholding in the countryside. On the other hand it would not be correct to minimise the extent of the land reforms carried out since the war.

000 To arrive at a balanced estimate of the extent of land reforms each country will have to be dealt with separately, even though for lack of space only a brief statement of the facts can be given. The countries will be dealt with in order, beginning with those in which the changes in the ownership of land after World

● 162 *Of the total population those engaged in agriculture, fishing and forestry made up: in Bulgaria (1934) 80 per cent; Yugoslavia (1931) 79 per cent; Rumania (1930) 76 per cent; Poland (1931) 65 per cent; Hungary (1930) 53 per cent; Czechoslovakia (1930) 38 per cent.

with a high standard of living which is able to pay good prices 511 for the dairy products, meat, eggs, etc. (Thus the prosperity of 43d Holland and Denmark depends on the prosperity of the urban population in Britain). In Eastern Europe the growth of grass and root crops is made difficult by the dry climate, and so, intensive production of meat, as in Denmark, Holland, Eire, England, etc., is impossible. But this does not preclude the production of milk and the raising of pigs. In some areas, there are excellent natural conditions for specialised crops, e.g., in Bulgaria and Serbia for tobacco and grapes. Other areas—and these form the greater part of Eastern Europe—are more suitable for growing corn, which could be done on the American model with tractors and combine harvesters, instead of with draught animals whose feeding takes up a lot of the arable land. In many places the best results could be achieved by mixed farming, combining mechanized corn growing with intensive production of milk, pigs, vegetables and fruits. But however agriculture develops in this area, experience has shown that the decisive factor in raising the standard of living in the countryside is the accessibility of expanding urban markets. No raising of the rate of agricultural production, no improvement in the standard of living is possible without rapid industrialisation, which will enable the surplus agricultural population to be absorbed, will provide a market for agricultural products and will supply agricultural implements and machinery as well as industrial consumption goods for the peasants. In addition the peasants need 'cheap government' and a cheap marketing system.

Problems of Industrial Development

If Eastern Europe is to be industrialised, large amounts of 162 capital will be needed, which can be estimated by considering the number of people to be absorbed into industry. Obviously any such calculation can be only approximate and be put forward by way of illustration.

First there is the surplus population in agriculture. W. E. Moore calculated this by estimating what was a 'reasonable' European standard of agricultural population. The result was as follows :

STALIN'S SATELLITES IN EUROPE

'STANDARD' AND 'SURPLUS' AGRICULTURAL POPULATIONS,
EASTERN EUROPE, AROUND 1930

		Population Dependent on Agriculture ooo's omitted	'Standard' Population ooo's omitted	'Surplus' Population Number	Per cent
				ooo's omitted	
Czechoslovakia	..	4,812	5,038	-226	-4.7
Hungary	..	4,472	3,471	1,001	22.4
Poland	..	19,347	9,425	9,922	51.3
Rumania	..	13,069	6,348	6,721	51.4
Bulgaria	..	4,088	1,921	2,167	53.0
Yugoslavia	..	10,629	4,097	6,532	61.5
Albania	..	800	178	622	77.7
Total		57,217	30,478	26,739	46.7

(op. cit. pp. 63-4).

46.7 per cent, nearly half the agricultural population of Eastern Europe, is 'surplus' population.

Out of its active population, employable in industry and services, agriculture can dispense with about 12 million people.

This calculation of W. E. Moore is based on the assumption that if the average level of production of agricultural goods for Europe as a whole were to prevail in Eastern Europe, there would be a surplus population of 26.7 million, of whom 12 million would be employable. But if it is assumed that the level of output remains unaltered, then the resulting calculation of surplus employable population will be different. Such a calculation was made by PEP which estimates that in 1937 the agricultural overpopulation in the Eastern European countries was 14-15 million (i.e., about half W. E. Moore's figure) of which about 6 million were employable in industry and services.

The war led to a considerable change as regards the 'surplus' agricultural population in Poland. The population of Poland dropped from an estimated 35,090,000 in 1938 to an estimated 23,800,000 in 1948, as a result of the killing of 6 million inhabitants by the Nazis and changes in the eastern frontiers which transferred 6 million Ukrainians and White Russians to the U.S.S.R. About 32,100,000 people lived within the present frontiers before the war. It seems, therefore, that Poland has 'solved' the problem and may be excluded from the list of countries with an agricultural overpopulation. Even so the overpopulation in the countries of Eastern Europe as a whole remains a vast problem: according to W. E. Moore there is a

total number of foreign workers in Germany, including 167 prisoners of war and foreign civilian workers officially recognized as foreigners, but excluding workers from Alsace-Lorraine and Sudetenland, exceeded six million in 1943. In 1944 the high mark of eight million was reached (of whom nearly 2 million were p.o.w.'s—Y.G.) (p. 264). He adds: 'Altogether, it can be estimated that the displacement of 30 million or more people during Hitler's rule over Europe has resulted in the permanent shifting of 2-3 million. The final redistribution of Europe's population was due to Germany's defeat, which opened the way for a new and in this case permanent migration of another twenty-five million*, probably the greatest in European history' (p. 305). 563 661

Considerations of space make it necessary to choose between alternative methods of describing the character of the expulsions, either by relating more or less in detail the fate of the Germans in one of the East European countries, or briefly surveying the fate of the Germans in them all. The former method is preferable, and the treatment of the Germans in Czechoslovakia will be taken as the example.

The Sudeten Germans

The Sudeten Germans were not new inhabitants of Sudetenland. They came there about 700 years ago, when Spain was still in the hands of the Arabs, and some centuries before America was discovered. They were as numerous as the populations of some of Europe's small states. The 1930 census put their number at 3.2 million, as compared with Norway's 2.8 million, Finland's 3.6 million, Denmark's 3.7 million and Switzerland's 4.1 million. 162

The social structure of the Sudeten German community was not very different from that of the Czechs or Slovaks except that the percentage of workers was higher (a little higher than among the Czechs, and much higher than among the Slovaks). According to the 1930 census, the national communities comprised different social groups in the following proportions:— 565

*In this is included some millions of non-Germans: Poles who had migrated from the area annexed by Russia (about 4 million) to the Western territories taken from Germany, Czechs and Slovaks who migrated to Sudetenland, displaced persons who returned to their countries, Jewish refugees who migrated to Palestine and other countries, etc.

other than Lenin, who wrote of that very Church: 'That shameful and accursed past when the Church was in feudal dependence on the State and Russian citizens were in feudal dependence on the established Church'. The Church, however, conveniently forgets Lenin's words and rewrites its past. Thus Karpov said: 'The Russian Orthodox Church in the days of hard trial, which our Fatherland repeatedly underwent in the past, did not break its link with the people, it lived with their needs, their hopes, their wishes and contributed its mite to the common struggle ...'

Religious Denominations in Eastern Europe

The experience of Russia has served the Kremlin as a pattern for its handling of the religious question in the satellite countries.

In these countries there are two main religious denominations, the Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox.

The available statistics on the distribution of population according to religion are pre-war censuses. Since then changes in boundaries, the migration of populations, and the annihilation of many people during the war, including nearly the whole of the Jewish population of these countries (of nearly 5 million Jews only 700 thousand remained) have made these statistics obsolete. But for lack of more recent data they will have to be used, and if care is taken the margin of error need not be too big.

There are big Roman Catholic communities in all the satellite countries except Bulgaria. In Poland, Roman Catholics comprise more than 90 per cent of the population, in Czechoslovakia 73 per cent, in Hungary 64 per cent, in Yugoslavia 37 per cent and in Rumania 6 per cent. In three of these countries there are considerable Greek Orthodox communities: in Bulgaria, 86 per cent of the population, in Rumania 70 per cent and in Yugoslavia 49 per cent. In Hungary and Czechoslovakia there are important Protestant minorities (26 per cent and 8 per cent of the population respectively). In Bulgaria, Moslems form 13 per cent of the population and in Yugoslavia 11 per cent.

The Communists' Attitude to the Orthodox Church

From the beginning the Communist Parties and Governments showed entirely different attitudes towards the Greek Orthodox

8 CHALLENGE IN EASTERN EUROPE

Principal Eastern European Nationalities Before
the First World War *

(APPROXIMATE FIGURES IN THOUSANDS)

	Austria Hungary ^a	Russia ^b	Germany ^c	Rumania ^d	Serbia ^e	Monte- negro ^f	Bulgaria ^g	Albania ^h
POLES	5,000	7,931	3,086	—	—	—	—	—
MAGYARS	10,100	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
CZECHS	6,550	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
SLOVAKS	1,950	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
SLOVENES	1,300	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
CROATIANS	2,625	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
SERBIANS	1,925	—	—	—	4,048	—	—	—
MOHAMMEDAN SERBO- CROATIANS IN BOSNIA	650	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
MACEDONIAN SLAVS	—	—	—	—	500	—	100	—
MONTENE- GRINS	—	—	—	—	—	516	—	—
RUMANIANS	3,200	1,122	—	7,136	—	—	—	—
BULGARIANS	—	173	—	200	—	—	4,153	—
ALBANIANS	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	800

* Fully satisfactory statistics on the nationalities of Eastern Europe for this period are not available, owing to inadequate census data as well as the imprecision of the concept of "nationality." The above figures refer only to the nationalities that emerged as independent states, or dominant members thereof, after the First World War. They omit the Germans, Ukrainians (Ruthenians), Turks, Italians, and others who formed a significant part of the population of this region in 1914. The following are the sources used:

* Robert A. Kann, *The Multinational Empire*, Vol. II, p. 305; based on census of 1910.

^b Brokgauz-Efron, *Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar*, Suppl. Vol. II, App., p. xii; based on census of 1897.

^c *Statesman's Yearbook*, 1914, p. 890; based on census of 1900.

^d *Ibid.*, p. 1213, estimates of 1913.

^e *Ibid.*, p. 1282, estimate for 1913, author's estimate of Macedonian Slavs.

^f *Ibid.*, p. 1090, estimate for 1913.

^g *Ibid.*, p. 727, estimate for 1914; author's estimate of Macedonian Slavs.

^h *Ibid.*, p. 621, estimate for 1913.

5

Land Reform and Agricultural Improvement

LADISLAV FEIERABEND

I

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369 Eastern Europe was overwhelmingly peasant between the two world wars. The peasantry, for whom land was not merely a means of production or of income, but the established basis of family life, formed the majority of the population. The main problem of this region was rural overpopulation. In the period before the First World War, the surplus young people emigrated in considerable numbers to the United States and to other overseas countries. After 1918 this outlet was closed, and everybody had to remain on his home soil. There was too little land for too many people: roughly twice as many people were living off the land as was the case in Western Europe.

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241 Everybody wanted land and therefore the price was enormously high. After money was spent to buy the land, there was not enough left to buy the numbers of cattle that the holding could support or to improve farming techniques. Lack of capital was responsible for the fact that farming methods remained the same as they had been for fifty or more years. The yields were very low, and there was no possibility of increasing them. In fact, yields decreased be-

94 CHALLENGE IN EASTERN EUROPE

423 cause the land was becoming exhausted. This was due to a
341 lack of manure and fertilizer and to the peasants' ignorance
of land preservation techniques.

[444] Labor remained so cheap that the introduction of labor-
saving devices did not pay. Overpopulation meant that there
were more people living on holdings than were needed for
the farm work. This situation caused underemployment.
Since overpopulation decreased the output per man and with
it the earnings per man, a very low standard of living resulted.

423 The size of the farms, which on the average was barely
656 ten acres, was a problem in itself, and the custom of dividing
185 land after the death of a peasant made the situation even
more acute. The holdings consisted of many small and scat-
tered strips so that it was impossible for the peasant to use
machines, even when they were available. However, the land
reforms, carried out after the First World War by the dif-
ferent governments, did have some success in equalizing
the amounts of land held by the different peasants.

The land reforms grew out of political and national con-
siderations rather than out of social and economic policy.
The first and main objective of the agrarian parties was to
expropriate the big landowners and to transfer their land to
the peasants. The usual procedure was to fix a maximum
acreage, usually about five hundred acres, and to decree that
all land in excess of this amount should be sold to peasants,
either to create new farms or to add to the area of peasant
farms already in existence. Under these reforms, about
twenty-five million acres were distributed, for the most part
in quite small plots, averaging one hectare, or 2.4 acres.
The smaller farms were given more land than the large, so
that there was some leveling of the incomes derived from
farming.

162 These reforms did not remedy the unhappy condition of
464 the peasantry, since they were unable to remove the main
511 causes for distress. If all the agricultural land of this region

had been distributed equally among the peasants, the main result would have been the equalization of poverty. It was obvious that redistribution of the national income and wealth could not, by itself, greatly improve the condition of the people. The surplus agricultural population which was estimated, on the basis of the system of cultivation prevailing in that area, to be about fifteen million persons had to be absorbed, and that was an insoluble problem. This problem was heightened by the fact that between 1919 and 1939 the natural increase of population in this area remained almost three times as high as that in the West. 162 ●
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Some alleviation of the situation was sought in the development of industries. However, industrialization was a long-term measure, and the expense only added to the peasants' burden. The fiscal policy of the Eastern European states was to accumulate the national capital necessary for industrialization by taxes, tariffs, and prices. No money, or very little, was left for the peasants.

II

It would be unjust, however, to say that nothing was done to improve the lot of the peasantry. The governments were well aware that the land reforms should be supplemented by economic measures such as agrarian credits, modern co-operatives, development of transport, cheaper farm machinery, technical education and training. A great deal was accomplished by these measures. 452
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The supply of credit was particularly important to the peasants. The need for capital to begin operations and to finance certain family needs, especially the weddings of daughters, made borrowing necessary. As banks would not make advances, money had to come from moneylenders who charged very high rates of interest. Often, the money-lender was the middleman who bought the peasant's produce

Because of this situation, the different peoples of this region turn three different masks to the world. One is always turned toward the West, one toward the East, and one is used for the stage show that these peoples put on for each other. If a nation of Eastern Europe takes off its mask, it may disappear from the stage forever. This is an important point to keep in mind in trying to understand the evolution of these countries. 101/178

Another important factor in the history of this region is that all the important ideologies and social revolutions have moved from West to East. Nationalism and the abolition of serfdom reached Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century. Industrialization advanced eastward at the end of the nineteenth century and during the first half of the twentieth. The closer a state was connected with the West, the sooner its transformation took place, while the other states were forced to develop in a comparatively short time in order to maintain their status as equals.

I

As a result of the Treaty of Versailles, everything changed in this area of constant change—boundaries, minorities, administrations, politics, and economics. In spite of these changes, and this is most important, the Eastern European countries remained predominantly agricultural. 178/162●241

The proportions of populations dependent upon agriculture in the several states within a decade after gaining full independence were as follows: Albania, 80 per cent; Bulgaria, 75 per cent; Rumania, 72 per cent; Yugoslavia, 76 per cent; Poland, 60 per cent; Hungary, 51 per cent; and Czechoslovakia 33 per cent. In contrast to these figures, the percentages of gainfully occupied males in industry in the same period were: Bulgaria, 13 per cent; Rumania, 11 per cent; Yugoslavia, 14 per cent; Poland, 22 per cent; Hungary, 26

178 per cent; and Czechoslovakia, 41 per cent. Thus it can be
 ●/162 easily seen that, with the exception of Czechoslovakia whose
 24/ industry was the most developed in the region, the coun-
 tries of Eastern Europe were predominantly agricultural and
 peasant in nature. Yet despite the predominantly peasant
 character of these countries, the peasants as such had rela-
 tively little political influence.

178 Although there was an increase in the output of agricul-
 24/ tural goods in all these countries between 1918 and 1945,
 5/1 the competition offered by overseas cereals strongly affected
 the agriculture of Eastern Europe. Cereals, one of the major
 products of the region, had to be undersold to Germany.
 Added to this unfortunate situation, the world depression of
 1929 came as a terrible blow to the economy of Eastern
 Europe, the most disastrous years lasting from 1931 until
 1934. Industry, with its frequent cartels, was better able to
 defend itself than was agriculture, and thus the "price scis-
 sors," or the disparity between agricultural and industrial
 prices, cut mostly into the income of the agricultural popu-
 lation. This resulted in a general lowering of both the pur-
 chasing power and the standard of living. Loans at high rates
 of interest were frequent and taxation increased the poverty
 of the peasants. These, as the major element of the popula-
 tion, pressed heavily for reforms and spread malcontent in
 their respective countries.

185 Soon after the First World War, some states realized that
 167 the solution to this situation was industrialization. Emigra-
 433 tion, as a possible solution, was not favored in any of the
 Eastern European states as it would have decreased man-
 power. Since war was considered more or less imminent
 after 1933, military and industrial groups were especially
 opposed to any large-scale loss of population, although emi-
 gration was never prohibited by actual government order.

185 Bohemia, which had been in a highly advantageous posi-
 433 tion in the industrialization program of Austria before the

fields such as law, medicine, engineering, or economics often renounced their humble origin and were happy to be absorbed into the urban population. Even the newly formed commercial class preferred to stay in the cities. As a result, the urban population increased steadily and towns grew rapidly. 369

Urbanization advanced with the growth of industry. An illustration of this is offered by the growth in population of six industrial cities in each of the following countries: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria. The total population of these cities rose from six and one-half million to ten million between the two world wars. The pace of industrialization was most rapid in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Poland, where the aforementioned cities almost doubled their urban population. In the other three countries (Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania), the population in these cities increased by approximately 30 per cent. Striking examples of how industrialization and transportation attracted people to cities are given by Katowice, a coal and heavy industry center in Silesia, whose population rose from forty-five to one hundred and thirty-three thousand, and by Gdynia, Poland's Baltic port, whose population rose from three to one hundred and fourteen thousand between the wars. 369 162●

The regional distribution of industrial population was not uniform. Around 1930, 90 per cent of Czechoslovakia's industrial population lived in the Czecho-Moravian district. Poland's industrial population concentrated around Warsaw, Lodz, and the Silesian coal basin. In Hungary, 41 per cent of the people earning their livings in industrial occupations were concentrated in Budapest. In Yugoslavia, 63 per cent of the industrial wage earners lived in Croatia and in the regions that had previously been Hungarian. In Rumania, 25 per cent of the industrial population lived in Transylvania and 28 per cent in Muntenia. Only Bulgaria's industrial pop-

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● 162 uation showed any tendency toward decentralization, with 30 per cent of her total industrial population living in the district of Sofia.

The industrial population of these countries was occupied as follows: 25 to 30 per cent in the textile and clothing industries; 18 to 21 per cent in heavy and metallurgy industries; 11 to 22 per cent in the food industry; and 7 to 17 per cent in the lumber industry. A variation in industrial goods and in producing plants was found only in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, in southern Poland and Transylvania, and in the areas of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire.

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185 One of the major problems facing the new governments in their industrialization programs was to equate the growth of the industrial working populations with improvement in industrial working and social conditions. Social legislation in the interwar period attained considerable progress in this direction. Prior to 1914 there already existed in Eastern Europe various social insurance and pension plans, and these were expanded between 1919 and 1939. Compulsory workers' accident and health insurance plans were introduced whereby both employers and wage earners contributed to a central fund to provide coverage for accident, illness, maternity, disability, old age, death, and unemployment. Generally speaking, the working day was reduced to eight hours, with a maximum forty-eight hour week, and the age minimum for child and woman labor was fixed at fourteen years or, in the case of heavy and dangerous work, such as mining, at sixteen to eighteen years. However, rigid application of these measures was far from universal.

A notable innovation was the establishment by the agrarian regime in Bulgaria of a compulsory labor service for the development of public works in place of the traditional military service which had been prohibited by the peace treaty. Expenditures in 1937 for social services for the entire region averaged 3 per cent of the estimated national in-

144 CHALLENGE IN EASTERN EUROPE

563 peoples. The accompanying table shows the distribution of languages in Eastern Europe in the interwar period as established by the League of Nations.

● 162 Distribution of Principal Languages in Eastern
197 Europe about 1930 *

(APPROXIMATE FIGURES IN THOUSANDS)

Language	Albania	Bulgaria	Czechoslovakia	Hungary	Poland	Rumania	Yugoslavia **
Russian	—	12	—	—	139	451	25
Ukrainian	—	—	569	1	4,442	641	31
White Russian	—	—	—	—	1,697	—	—
Polish	—	—	100	—	21,993	38	18
Czechoslovakian	—	—	9,757	108	38	43	138
Serbo-Croatian	—	—	6	55	—	48	10,257
Slovene	—	—	—	5	—	—	1,159
Bulgarian	—	5,275	—	3	—	364	73
German	—	4	3,318	479	741	761	602
Rumanian	13	16	14	16	—	13,181	276
Greek	37	10	—	—	—	21	—
Albanian	984	—	—	—	—	4	524
Gypsy	—	81	33	8	—	101	54
Hungarian	—	—	720	8,001	—	1,555	557
Turkish	30	622	—	—	—	288	180
Others	—	58	213	12	2,866	561	41
Totals	1,064	6,078	14,730	8,688	31,916	18,057	13,935

* Based on Dudley Kirk, *Europe's Population in the Interwar Years* (Geneva: League of Nations), Table 17, pp. 228-29.

** A. Meillet, *Les Langues dans l'Europe nouvelle* (Paris, 1928), p. 426, estimated that Macedonian was spoken by 628,000 in Yugoslavia in 1926, but in the official census this group was not distinguished from those speaking Serbo-Croatian.

563 The peacemakers were conscious of the problem that had
648 been created, and in order to make certain that the different linguistic groups would receive fair treatment it was required of these states that they subscribe to carefully worded provisions for the protection of their minorities. These pro-

Vienna was larger than Berlin and Austria did not appear to lag conspicuously behind Prussia; but by 1866 the lag had become conspicuous and was confirmed on the battlefields of the Austro-Prussian War. There seems to have been a significant acceleration of economic growth between 1880 and 1914; and it has been estimated that between 1900 and 1910 the percentage rate of growth in the national income of Austria was even somewhat faster than it was during the same decade in Western Europe. The percentage growth of the low income of Austria-Hungary was unable, nevertheless, to keep up with the very much higher levels of national income and industrial productivity which meanwhile had been attained in the West. 175
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Such economic growth as did occur was quite unevenly distributed. The economic position of the Germans and a few other groups was a great deal better than that of the rest of the peoples concerned, and the attempts of non-German groups to equal German economic standards often brought them into economic competition and political friction with Germans. After the economic depression of 1873, German nationalists raised the cry for the preservation of German supremacy, and the very attempts to mitigate or overcome economic inequality thus led to intensified economic competition and political conflict.

Economic development was poorly distributed between town and country, as well as between nationalities. In most Western countries, country people had come to share many of the educational and cultural standards of the city populations. In Eastern Europe, by contrast, even the German-Austrian peasants were described before the First World War by the Viennese architect, Adolph Loos, as people wearing different clothes, speaking a different language, and having an infinitely more primitive way of life than the populations of the cities. 175
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The uneven distribution of economic opportunity was re-

175 inforced in its effect by the extreme splintering of national,
 • 162 linguistic, and religious affiliations. A good map of the na-
 433 tionalities, languages, and religions of Eastern Europe would
 have shown not the large patches of relatively homogeneous
 populations which are found in so much of Western Europe
 but rather a polka-dot pattern of intermixed minorities.

182 The relative national uniformity of the West is perhaps,
 at least in part, the product of a history rich in the processes
 of successful social learning and acculturation, which merged
 and melted the different ethnic groups that were left in the
 Western countries by accidents of migration, wars, and settle-
 ment. In Eastern Europe, such accidents of conquest or set-
 tlement may well have been even more numerous, but there
 is also some reason to think that the processes of assimilation
 were much slower and less effective.

Greater uniformity of language and culture means greater
 interchangeability of social roles. This is not merely a con-
 tributing cause to the growth in social mobility and in the
 interchange of social roles but is also to some extent their
 product. Where societies are rigorously stratified, where re-
 ligions fail to impress upon people an awareness of their es-
 sential unity, where the obstacles to a change in occupation
 or in social role are great, and the rewards for mobility are
 uncertain and small—in these societies individuals may best
 succeed in gaining security by clinging tenaciously to their
 familiar groups, languages, customs, and traditions, and by
 rejecting any assimilation to other groups except the most
 privileged as a threat to their existence. The more privileged
 groups, under these conditions, can only be expected to re-
 sent and resist the assimilation or intrusion of strangers, un-
 less these strangers come from regions of clearly greater
 wealth and greater prestige and seem to bring to the new
 group assets clearly greater than those they would demand.
 The lack of unity and assimilation in language and culture
 in Eastern Europe thus appears as one more aspect of the